Multiflora Rose

Rosa multiflora Thunb.

DESCRIPTION: Multiflora rose is a thorny, perennial shrub with arching stems (canes), and leaves divided into five to eleven sharply toothed leaflets. Beginning in May or June, clusters of showy, fragrant, white to pink flowers appear, each about an inch across. Small bright red fruits, or rose hips, develop during the summer, becoming leathery, and remain on the plant through the winter.

ECOLOGICAL THREAT: Multiflora rose is extremely prolific and can form impenetrable thickets that exclude native plant species. This exotic rose readily invades open woodlands, forest edges, successional fields, savannas and prairies that have been subjected to land disturbance.

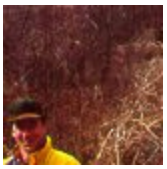
DISTRIBUTION IN THE UNITED STATES: Multiflora rose occurs throughout the U.S., with the exception of the Rocky Mountains, the southeastern Coastal Plain and the deserts of California and Nevada.

HABITAT IN THE UNITED STATES: Multiflora rose has a wide tolerance for various soil, moisture, and light conditions. It occurs in dense woods, prairies, along stream banks and roadsides and in open fields and pastures.

BACKGROUND: The native range of the multiflora rose is Japan, Korea, and eastern China Beginning in the 1930s, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service promoted it for use in erosion control and as "living fences" to confine livestock. More recently, multiflora rose has been planted in highway median strips to serve as crash barriers and to reduce automobile headlight glare. Its tenacious and unstoppable growth habit was eventually recognized as a problem on pastures and unplowed lands, where it disrupted cattle grazing. For these reasons, multiflora rose is classified as a noxious weed in several states, including Iowa, Ohio, West Virginia, and New Jersey.

METHODS OF REPRODUCTION & DISPERSAL: Multiflora rose reproduces by seed and by forming new plants that root from the tips of arching canes that contact the ground. Fruits are readily sought after by birds which are the primary dispersers of its seed. It has been estimated that an average multiflora rose plant may produce a million seeds per year, which may remain viable in the soil for up to twenty years. Germination of multiflora rose seeds is enhanced by passing through the digestive tract of birds.

CURRENT MANAGEMENT APPROACHES: Mechanical and chemical methods are currently the most widely used methods for managing multiflora rose. Frequent, repeated cutting or mowing at the rate of three to six times per growing season, for two to four years, has been shown to be effective in achieving high mortality of multiflora rose. Various herbicides have been used successfully in controlling multiflora rose but, because of the long-lived stores of seed in the soil, follow-up treatments are likely to be necessary. Biological control is not yet available for management of multiflora rose.



References: http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/rosamult.html http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/common.htm